

INTRODUCTION TO APOLOGETICS

INTRODUCTION

- When most people think of “apologetics” they think it is something reserved for the “professional”
- They usually have in mind someone who has a polished argument and is capable of answering every question of the intellectual skeptic
- Apologetics is thought to be too philosophical, abstract, and impractical for the layman
- Even many who understand the importance of evangelism think they should only share the gospel and then refer anyone who has a question to the “expert”
- Thus, for many Christians, apologetics is an area they dare not tread out of fear or an area they remain completely ignorant about.....But it should not be that way!
- Apologetics is something every believer is to engage in...in fact, we are commanded to:

📖 **Philippians 1:7** ~ For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.

📖 **Jude 3** ~ Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

- The need to rightly defend Christian truth is the responsibility of every believer
- Old and young, rich and poor, smart and simple-minded....everyone who has trusted Christ for salvation is required to study apologetics

WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?

The Definition of Apologetics

- The term “apologetics” is often misunderstood
- Usually when we use the word “apology” it means that we have wronged someone and need to express our remorse over doing so by saying “I’m sorry”
- This is the way “apology” is used in ordinary conversation
- This is not what the word means when we are talking about Christian apologetics
- The Greek word *apologia* = defense, reply to a formal charge, a defense of one’s innocence
- A defense or *apologia* is your statement of why you should be deemed innocent of the charges brought against you
- The *Apology of Socrates* is an account of the defense which he offered before the court in Athens
- In his *Apology*, Justin Martyr sought to defend his fellow Christians against the false accusations which were hurled at them by the unbelieving world
- This word is used this way in many places in Scripture:

📖 **Luke 12:11** ~ When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say;

📖 **Acts 22:1** ~ “Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer to you.”

📖 **1 Corinthians 9:3** ~ My defense to those who examine me is this:

- To “apologize” in this sense means to offer a defense; “apologetics” is the study which pertains directly to the development and use of a defense
- Thus, Christian Apologetics is our statement as to why Christ is innocent of the charges made against Him
- “Christian apologetics is the discipline where in an intelligent effort is made to defend before an unbelieving world the truth claim of the Christian faith, specifically its claim of exclusive true knowledge of the living and true God, in a manner consistent with the teaching of Scripture” ~ Reymond, p. 1

The Goal of Apologetics

- The Goal of Apologetics is NOT to win an argument
- It is not our defense of ourselves when we are ridiculed....it is our defense of God when He is ridiculed
- The Goal of Apologetics is to:
 1. Answer specific objections
 2. Raise and answer ultimate questions (The Christian faith alone answers these questions):
 - Who am I?
 - Where did I come from?
 - What is truth?
 - Does God exist?
 - Has He revealed Himself?
 - Why do I believe?
 3. Challenge non-Christian systems and ways of thought
 4. Present the truth of the Gospel
- Thus, it is both a negative defense and a positive offensive effort

Biblical Support for Apologetics

📖 **1 Peter 3:15** ~ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence

- This verse is the Magna Carta of Apologetic texts
- Notice some important truths in this verse as it pertains to apologetics:
 1. Starts with Christ being central in the believer’s life – **Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts**
 - Submission to the authority of Christ is necessary for a proper defense
 - As our Lord, Christ leads us as we defend the faith
 2. We must always be prepared – **always being ready to make a defense**

- Whenever the faith is challenged, we should be ready to respond to both the street person and the PhD
 - Although God does not need us to defend Him and His Word, He chooses to use us and accomplish His work through us
 - God, who needs no defense, asks us to defend him through our testimony
3. We are to give a clear answer – **an account for the hope that is in you**
- We must be able to explain why we are confident in God and His Word
 - In doing so, we answer his argument in such a way that closes his mouth so they stand before the truth of the Word of God with nothing credible to say
4. We are to give an answer in the right way – **yet with gentleness and reverence**
- We are to do this in a godly manner
 - Apologetics is not contentious – i.e. we are not to overwhelm them with a powerful argument
 - Nor is apologetics to be pugnacious – i.e. we are not to be looking for a fight
- 📖 **2 Timothy 2:24-26** ~ The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.
- Examine Acts 17:16-34 to see how Paul is an example of always being ready
 1. Scattering the Seed (vs. 16-21)
 2. Sharing the Truth (vs. 22-31)
 - a. Nature of God (vs. 22-26)
 - b. Nature of Man (vs. 27-29)
 - c. Need for Repentance (vs. 30)
 - d. Nearness of Future Judgment (vs. 31)
 - e. Necessity of Christ's Resurrection (vs. 31)
 3. Seeing a Response (vs. 32-34)

SCRIPTURE IS THE FOUNDATION

- The world's view of truth is SUBJECTIVE - Man is feeling his way, learning on his own.
 - The Christian view of truth is OBJECTIVE - Truth known only because God knows it & gives it to us
 - Thus, the problem is not intellectual; it's one of rebellion vs. submission.
 - The Bible provides the ground of our enterprise; the Word of God is our authority.
- 📖 **Psalms 19:7-9** ~ The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.
- 📖 **Hebrews 4:12** ~ For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

📖 **2 Timothy 3:16-17** ~ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- Christianity announces objective truth - truth that exists apart from subjective feelings and beliefs
- Truth is objective because it is truth both to God and to humans
- When we proclaim the gospel we must make it clear that we are communicating truth that is absolute and objective not just some psychological religious idea.
- God in His revelation is our first principle in theology
- If we can know and proclaim anything at all about God it is because He is real and true and has revealed Himself to us.